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SPARK OF LIFE #1
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SONIC UNIVERSE | 71
Tracy Yardley! Hunzeker
PLUS: WHO OR WHAT IS PHAGE?!

Welcome to Sonic's comic book adventures – a world beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where, as strange new threats emerge, NICOLE – the advanced artificial being – is confronted by a figure from her past...

SONIC UNIVERSE™

CHARACTER SELECT

PRINCESS SALLY ACORN
FREEDOM FIGHTER LEADER

NICOLE THE HOLO-LYNX
ADVANCED A.I.

MILES "TAILS" PROWER
YOUNG GENIUS

???

PREVIOUSLY...

PLANET PUZZLE

Thanks to the sinister Dr. Eggman, Dark Gaia has begun to stir, leaving the planet cracked and broken! Continents have split apart, and dark creatures emerge at night. Now, the Freedom Fighters are on the hunt for the Chaos Emeralds and Gaia Temples needed to restore the world!

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WEB LYNX VARIANT BY
Rafa Knight

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GET THESE THINGS OFF MY SHIP!
WORKING ON IT!
BIG THE CAT SELF-EXPLANATORY
ROTOR WALRUS SKY PATROL CAPTAIN
MILES "TAILS" PROWER FLYING GENIUS
SALLY ACORN ROYAL TACTICIAN
SPARK OF LIFE
=PART ONE=
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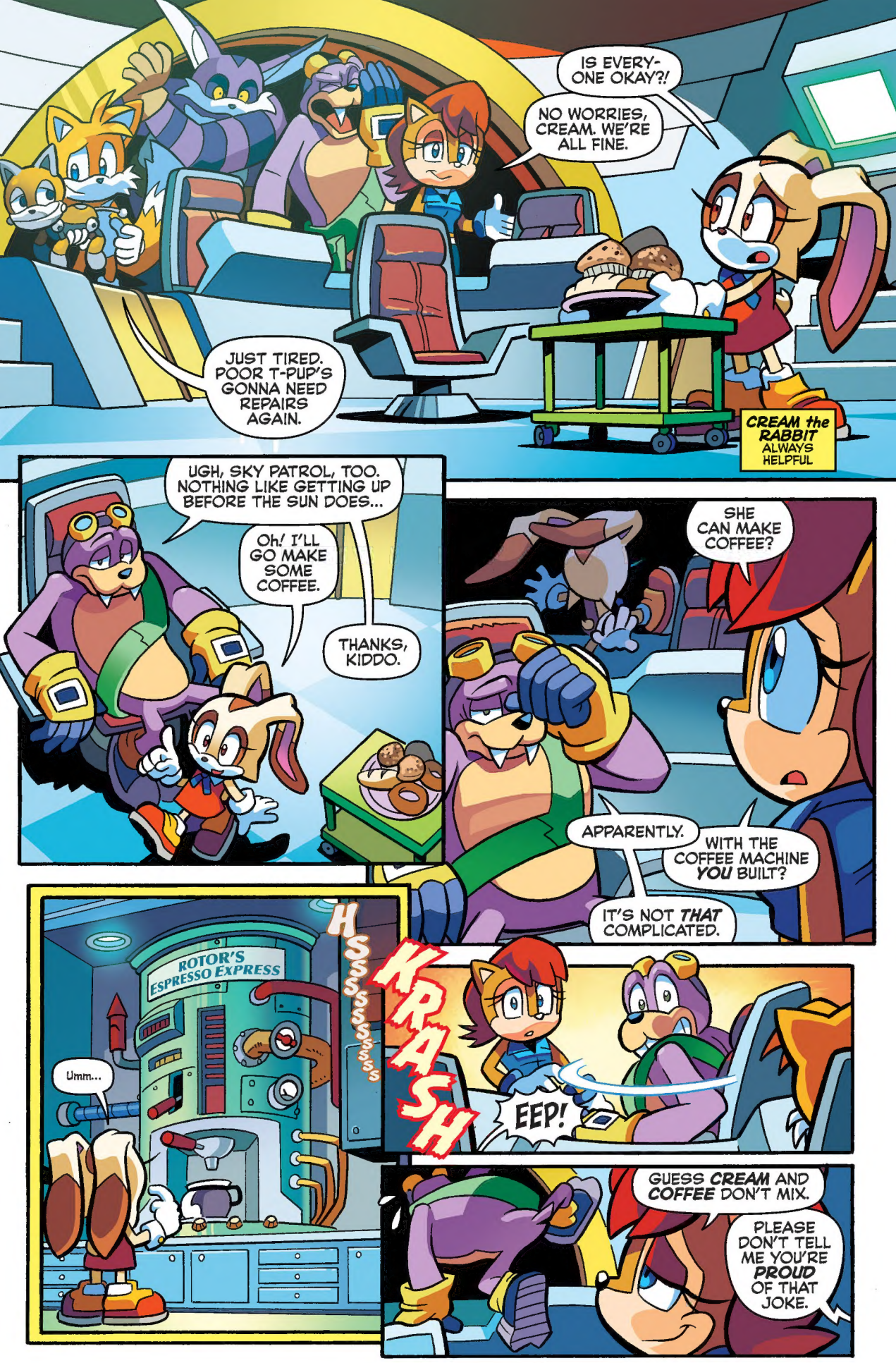
and the CHARACTER BUSINESS and LICENSING DEPARTMENT
of SEGA CORPORATION
POMF
HOW LONG TILL SUNRISE?!
NICOLE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
LESS THAN THREE MINUTES! PRECISELY, TWO MINUTES, SEVEN-TEEN--
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE--AHH!
DARK GAIA CREATURES NIGHT TERRORS FROM THE DEEP

POMF
THANKS FOR THE SAVE!
SAME TO YOU!
Heh... THAT FELT LIKE A LONG TWO MINUTES.


IS EVERY-ONE OKAY?!
NO WORRIES, CREAM. WE'RE ALL FINE.
JUST TIRED. POOR T-PUP'S GONNA NEED REPAIRS AGAIN.
CREAM the RABBIT ALWAYS HELPFUL
UGH, SKY PATROL, TOO. NOTHING LIKE GETTING UP BEFORE THE SUN DOES...
Oh! I'LL GO MAKE SOME COFFEE.
THANKS, KIDDO.
SHE CAN MAKE COFFEE?
APPARENTLY.
WITH THE COFFEE MACHINE YOU BUILT?
IT'S NOT THAT COMPLICATED.
ROTOR'S ESPRESSO EXPRESS
HSSSSSSSSSSSS
Umm...
KRASH
EEP!
GUESS CREAM AND COFFEE DON'T MIX.
PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE PROUD OF THAT JOKE.

Oh SHUSH, I'M TIRED.
SALLY...I KNOW EVERYTHING TURNED OUT FOR THE BEST, BUT IF I MAY...
WHAT YOU DID BACK THERE WAS RECKLESS. CREATURES LIKE THE ONES HARASSING TAILS DISAPPEAR ONCE THE SUN RISES. THEY WOULD NOT HAVE LASTED MUCH LONGER.
I KNOW THAT. BUT IT'S NOT LIKE I COULD JUST WATCH AND DO NOTHING, EITHER.
SIGH I UNDERSTAND. AT LEAST, I THINK I DO. BUT STILL--
AUGH!
...WHAT... DR. ELLIDY...!
WAIT, WHAT? NICOLE!
NOW WHAT'S WRONG?
SHE'S GONE!

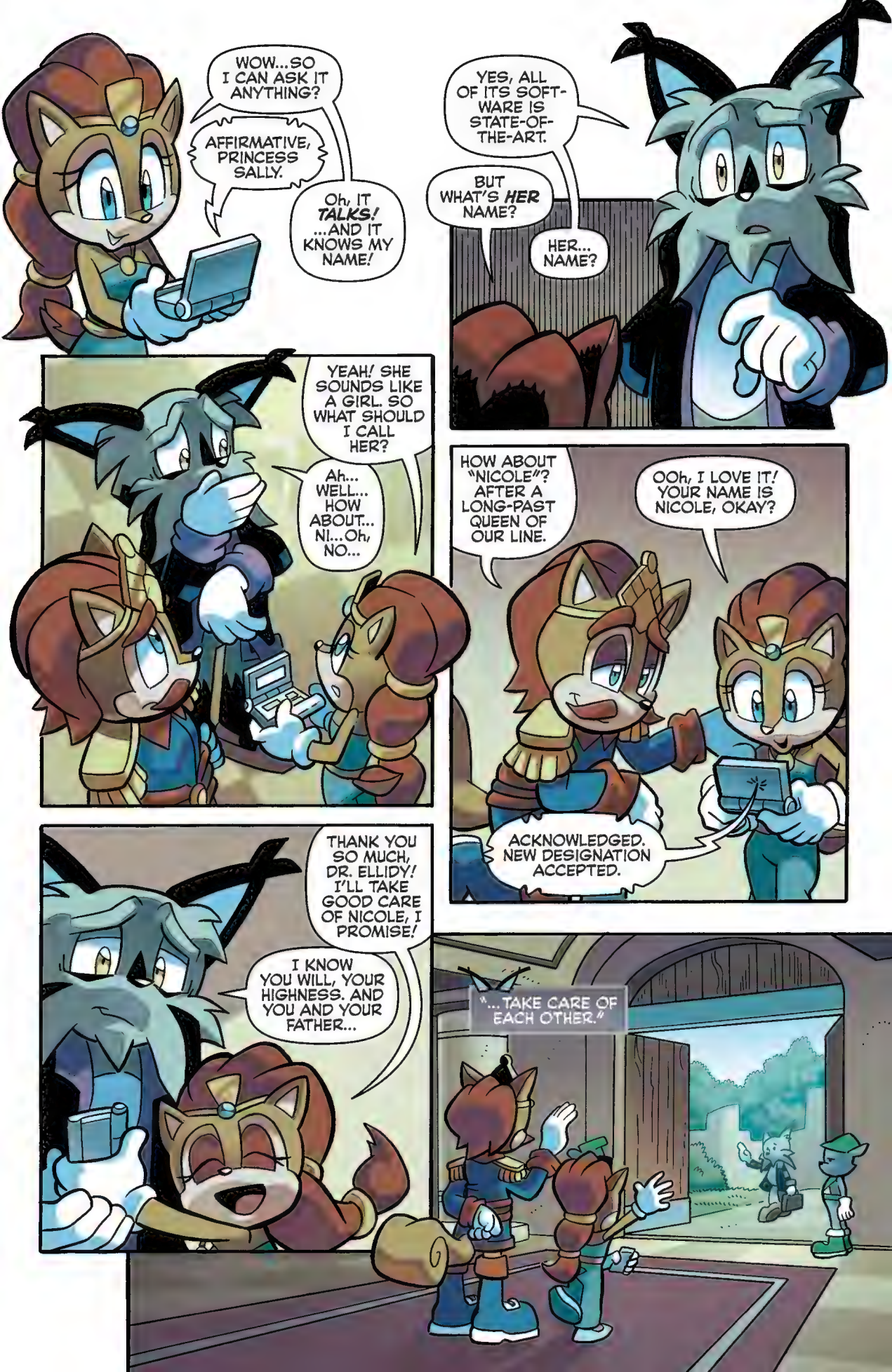
I DON'T GET IT! SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT DR. ELLIDY AND DISAPPEARED!
WE HAVEN'T HEARD THAT NAME IN A WHILE.
NICOLE ISN'T ANYWHERE IN OUR SYSTEMS. BUT... WE'RE SHOWING READINGS FROM THE DIGITAL WORLD, SO I THINK THAT'S WHERE SHE MUST'VE GONE.
SOMETHING MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO DR. ELLIDY... WE'D BETTER GO CHECK HIS RESIDENCE ON ISOLATED ISLAND. BUT NICOLE...
SHE CAN ALWAYS JUMP BACK FROM THE DIGITAL WORLD TO SKY PATROL'S SYSTEMS. BUT IF THE 'OL DOC'S IN TROUBLE, YOU'D BETTER GET MOVING.
OKAY! THE TORNADO WILL GET US THERE THE FASTEST. TAILS! BIG! YOU TWO ARE WITH ME! LET'S MOVE!
Um... MR. ROTOR...? WHAT'S THE "DIGITAL WORLD"?
"WHERE DID NICOLE GO?"

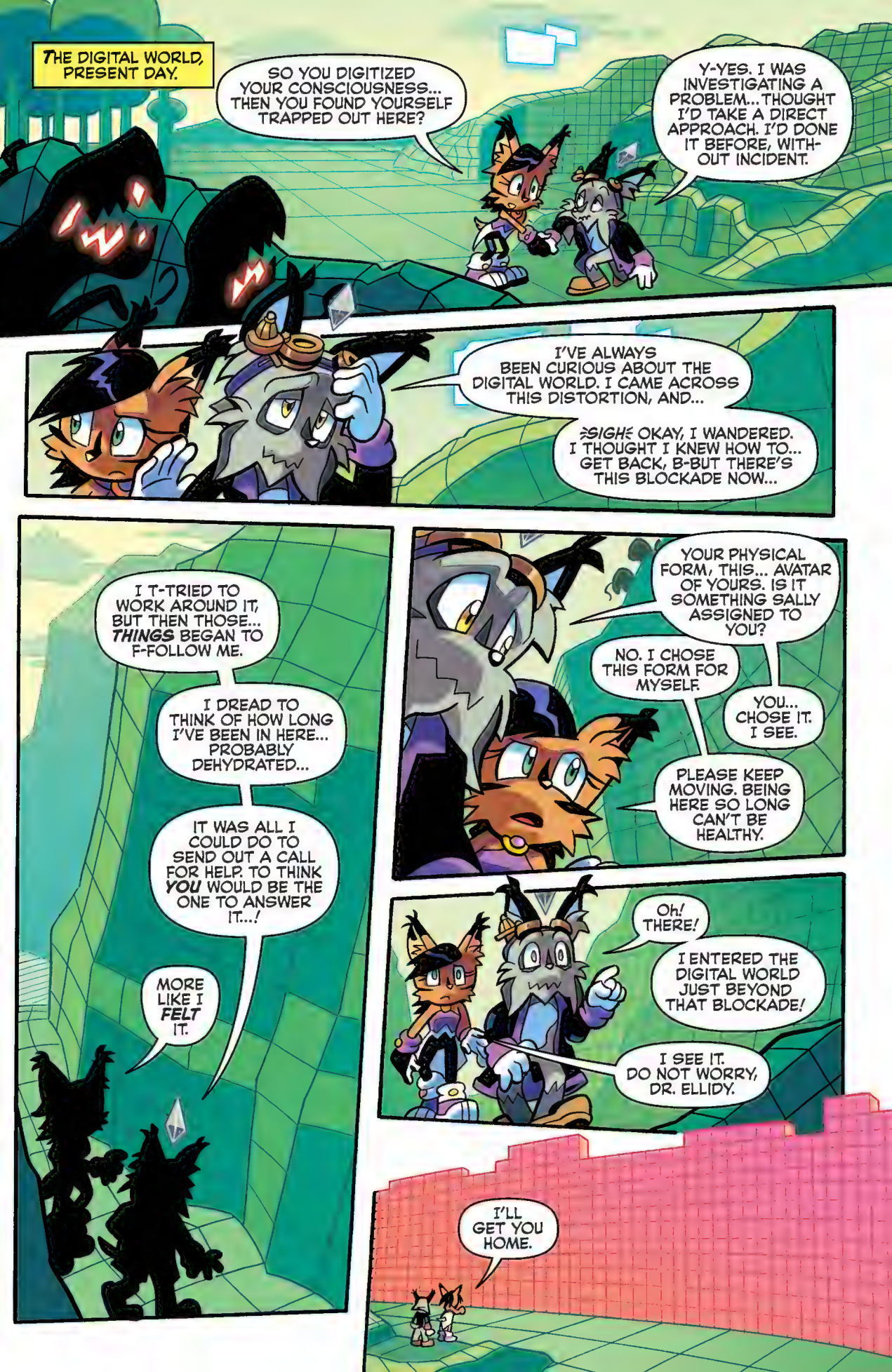
"THE DIGITAL WORLD... IT'S KIND OF LIKE AN ARTIFICIAL REALITY.
"IT DOESN'T EXIST IN THE REAL WORLD. WHICH IS TO SAY THAT WHILE IT CAN BE ACCESSED FROM COMPUTERS...
"...IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ACTUALLY "HOUSED" IN ONE ANYWHERE. IN FACT, NO ONE KNOWS WHERE IT CAME FROM.
"IT MIGHT BE THAT THE ENTIRE DIGITAL WORLD MOVES LIKE AN INVISIBLE CLOUD, OVERLAPPING OTHER SYSTEMS.
"SOME PEOPLE THINK IT MIGHT EVEN PREDATE COMPUTING AS WE KNOW IT.
"TO BE HONEST, WHAT WE KNOW IS MORE THEORY THAN FACT.
"WHATEVER'S GOING ON... IF DR. ELLIDY IS IN TROUBLE AND CALLED OUT THROUGH THE DIGITAL WORLD SOMEHOW...
"...NICOLE MAY BE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP."

H-HELP... PLEASE... NO...NO MORE...
GET AWAY FROM HIM!
WHATEVER THESE ARE, THEY'RE INSISTENT.
I HAVE NO CHOICE...
VWOOOSH
THERE. THEY CAN'T HURT YOU.
...IT CAN'T BE... N-NIC--
HELLO, DOCTOR. I SUPPOSE IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
...NICOLE...

MEANWHILE...
SONIC
I HAVEN'T SEEN DR. ELLIDY SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
Um... SO DR. ELLIDY IS NICOLE'S FATHER?
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
HE'S ALSO THE GUY WHO MADE THE MOBOTROPOLIS GRAND ARCHIVE, RIGHT? IT'S GOT INFORMATION ON JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING! I COULD SIT FOR HOURS READING IT... Uh, NOT THAT I HAVE.
WELL, NOT TOO OFTEN,
BACK WHEN HE WORKED FOR MY FATHER, HE WAS THE KINGDOM'S LEAD RESEARCHER AND DEVELOPER FOR COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY.
HE ALSO MADE THESE RING-BLADES FOR ME, LATER ON.
THAT'S KIND OF A JUMP, ISN'T IT? GOING FROM COMPUTER DEVELOPMENT TO MAGIC RING RESEARCH?
WELL, THE RING RESEARCH STARTED AFTER HE RETIRED...

"...A LOT OF THINGS CHANGED...
THE PAST.
MY BOAT LEAVES IN A COUPLE HOURS, KING ACORN. I'D BETTER BE ON MY WAY.
I'M STILL SAD TO SEE YOU GO, OLD FRIEND. YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR THIS KINGDOM.
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO...
I KNOW. I KNOW.
PLEASE DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF WITH ME, SIRE. I THINK THIS MOVE IS JUST WHAT I NEED. A FRESH START OF SORTS...
THERE ARE...TOO MANY OLD MEMORIES HERE...
I UNDERSTAND.
ARE YOU REALLY LEAVING, DR. ELLIDY?
Ah... JUST THE PRINCESS I WANTED TO SEE!
HERE...BEFORE I GO, I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.
A PRESENT?
AT FIRST, I WASN'T SURE WHAT I WANTED TO DO WITH THIS... BUT I THINK YOU'LL MAKE THE BEST USE OF IT.
THIS IS MY MOST POWERFUL COMPUTER TO DATE. IT HOUSES AN ADVANCED A.I.--A VERY SMART PROGRAM--THAT CONNECTS DIRECTLY TO THE GRAND ARCHIVE.
WITH THIS, YOU'LL HAVE A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS.


WOW...SO I CAN ASK IT ANYTHING?
AFFIRMATIVE, PRINCESS SALLY.
Oh, IT TALKS! ...AND IT KNOWS MY NAME!
YES, ALL OF ITS SOFT-WARE IS STATE-OF-THE-ART.
BUT WHAT'S HER NAME?
HER... NAME?
YEAH! SHE SOUNDS LIKE A GIRL. SO WHAT SHOULD I CALL HER?
Ah... WELL... HOW ABOUT... NI...Oh, NO...
HOW ABOUT "NICOLE"? AFTER A LONG-PAST QUEEN OF OUR LINE.
OOh, I LOVE IT! YOUR NAME IS NICOLE, OKAY?
ACKNOWLEDGED. NEW DESIGNATION ACCEPTED.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, DR. ELLIDY! I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF NICOLE, I PROMISE!
I KNOW YOU WILL, YOUR HIGHNESS. AND YOU AND YOUR FATHER...
"...TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER."


THE DIGITAL WORLD, PRESENT DAY.
SO YOU DIGITIZED YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS... THEN YOU FOUND YOURSELF TRAPPED OUT HERE?
Y-YES. I WAS INVESTIGATING A PROBLEM... THOUGHT I'D TAKE A DIRECT APPROACH. I'D DONE IT BEFORE, WITHOUT INCIDENT.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN CURIOUS ABOUT THE DIGITAL WORLD. I CAME ACROSS THIS DISTORTION, AND...
≥SIGH≤ OKAY, I WANDERED. I THOUGHT I KNEW HOW TO... GET BACK, B-BUT THERE'S THIS BLOCKADE NOW...
I T-TRIED TO WORK AROUND IT, BUT THEN THOSE... THINGS BEGAN TO F-FOLLOW ME.
I DREAD TO THINK OF HOW LONG I'VE BEEN IN HERE... PROBABLY DEHYDRATED...
IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO SEND OUT A CALL FOR HELP. TO THINK YOU WOULD BE THE ONE TO ANSWER IT...!
MORE LIKE I FELT IT.
YOUR PHYSICAL FORM, THIS... AVATAR OF YOURS. IS IT SOMETHING SALLY ASSIGNED TO YOU?
NO. I CHOSE THIS FORM FOR MYSELF.
YOU... CHOSE IT. I SEE.
PLEASE KEEP MOVING. BEING HERE SO LONG CAN'T BE HEALTHY.
Oh! THERE!
I ENTERED THE DIGITAL WORLD JUST BEYOND THAT BLOCKADE!
I SEE IT. DO NOT WORRY, DR. ELLIDY.
I'LL GET YOU HOME.

THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.
Oh, THANK GOODNESS...!
KRAK
GRUMMBLE
VWOOSH
HURRY, DOCTOR.

ISOLATED ISLAND
SORRY I COULDN'T LAND US ANY CLOSER.
DR. ELLIDY'S PLACE SHOULD BE RIGHT OVER THERE.
YES. I SAW IT RIGHT BEFORE WE LANDED. LET'S GO. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANYTHING UNUSUAL.
THIS ISLAND IS NICE. REMINDS ME OF HOME.
THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A LAKE OF RINGS HERE, RIGHT?
YES. DR. ELLIDY ONLY STARTED RESEARCHING RINGS ONCE HE MOVED HERE.
WHEN HE SENT ME THESE RING-BLADES, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE'D HEARD FROM HIM IN YEARS.
IT SOUNDS SO...LONELY.
YEAH.
EVEN IN THE MYSTIC RUINS, I ALWAYS HAD FROGGY WITH ME!
I HOPE NICOLE IS OKAY.
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING HERE COULD--

LOOK OUT!
VRRRRR
HELLO! ARE YOU IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE? IF SO, PLEASE FOLLOW ME!
IT TALKED!
I THINK IT'S A PRE-RECORDED MESSAGE.
ARE YOU IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE? IF SO, PLEASE FOLLOW ME!
Um, WE'RE LOOKING FOR DR. ELLIDY...?
PING
PLEASE FOLLOW ME.
VVVVVRRRRRRRRRRRR

I DON'T LIKE THIS.
THESE ARE ALL DR. EGGMAN'S BADNIKS...IT'S CREEPING ME OUT.
Huh. I THINK THEY'VE BEEN MODIFIED.

DR. ELLIDY? HELLO?
DOCTOR? ...Oh!
GASP!
AHH!

DR. ELLIDY! IT'S SALLY ACORN! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
P-PRINCESS SALLY...WHA... Oh, MY HEAD...
PERFECT TIMING. SORRY FOR LEAVING SKY PATROL SO ABRUPTLY.
NICOLE! HERE, JUST A SEC...
THE DOCTOR HAD DIGITIZED HIS CONSCIOUSNESS AND GOTTEN TRAPPED IN THE DIGITAL WORLD FOR SEVERAL HOURS.
BIG, GET SOME WATER, PLEASE.
OKAY!
Oh, THANK YOU...
THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR COMING...
IT'S THANKS TO NICOLE THAT WE EVEN KNEW YOU WERE IN TROUBLE.
IN FACT... WHY DON'T YOU THANK HER IN PERSON?
IN...IN PERSON?
...HOW...
LIKE I SAID, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...
AND...I'VE LEARNED A FEW TRICKS SINCE YOU FIRST CREATED ME.

SHORTLY...
I FOUND A CAN OF BROTH IN THE KITCHEN. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND...YOU NEED TO GET YOUR STRENGTH UP.
Oh, THANK YOU.
I ADDED SOME HERBS FROM SOME OF THE POTTED PLANTS IN THERE...
TRUTH BE TOLD, WITH CREAM AND ANTOINE ON THE SKY PATROL, I DON'T GET TO COOK MUCH.
IT'S VERY... BRACING.
WELL... GOOD.
DOCTOR, IF YOU DON'T MIND...WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'M SURE YOU NOTICED MY LITTLE BADNIK BUDDIES ABOUT? LONG STORY SHORT, DR. EGGMAN LEFT THEM BEHIND AFTER SOME FAILED OPERATION OUT HERE, SO I REPURPOSED THEM.
THEY HELP WITH THE CHORES, AND I USE THEM TO MONITOR THE ISLAND. ALSO, AS OF LATE...THEY HELP DETER THOSE BEASTS THAT SOMETIMES COME LURKING AT NIGHT.
THE DARK GAIA CREATURES. WE WERE ATTACKED BY SOME THIS MORNING.

IT'S HORRIFIC. CHUCK CALLED ME TO EXPLAIN WHAT WAS GOING ON, HOPING I HAD SOME INSIGHT. NOT REALLY MY FIELD, OF COURSE...BUT I'M GLAD THAT YOU ARE TAKING ACTION.
AFTER THE QUAKES,* I SENT SOME OF MY ROBOTS OUT TO INVESTIGATE. SOME OF THE FOOTAGE I RECEIVED...THE WATER JUST STOPS AND THEN, NOTHING BUT A CLOUDED ABYSS...I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE OCEAN ITSELF HASN'T POURED OFF THE EDGE.
*THE WORLD SHATTERED APART IN SONIC THE HEDGEHOG VOL. 1 GRAPHIC NOVEL--EDITOR
ACTUALLY, ABOUT THAT... "IT'S MAGIC" SUMS IT UP PRETTY WELL.*
I HATE THAT EXCUSE.
EVEN WHEN IT'S ACCURATE?
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S ACCURATE.
DOCTOR, I WANTED TO DISCUSS SOMETHING WITH YOU.
*WE DISCOVERED WHY IN "WAVES OF CHANGE"! STH #260-263--EDITOR
ACTUALLY...I THINK I NEED TO GO LIE DOWN. I'M STILL NOT FEELING WELL...
LET ME HELP.
NO, NO, DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF. I JUST NEED TO REST FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
NICOLE... WE CAN TALK LATER.
...VERY WELL.

SALLY... AM I CAUSING DR. ELLIDY DISTRESS?
I THINK HE'S JUST HAD A ROUGH DAY, NICOLE. YOU'VE CHANGED A LOT SINCE HE LAST SAW YOU.

HE'S BEEN LIVING OUT HERE ALL ALONE FOR A WHILE NOW. I WOULDN'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY IF HE'S A BIT DISTANT. OKAY?
ALL RIGHT.

...I BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE OR SOME*THING* DELIBERATELY ATTEMPTED TO PREVENT HIM FROM LEAVING THE DIGITAL WORLD.

ACTUALLY, HE DIDN'T REALLY ANSWER MY QUESTION ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON HERE.
HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO USE THE DIGITIZER TO TROUBLESHOOT A PROBLEM WITH THE REPROGRAMMED BADNIKS WHEN HE WAS STRANDED IN THE DIGITAL WORLD.
ABOUT THAT...

AND NOW I'M CONCERNED THAT WHATEVER OR WHOEVER PLACED THE BARRICADE MAY HAVE BEEN LED BACK HERE...

...OR MAY ALREADY *BE* HERE.

AN ORGANIC BEING ABLE TO PROJECT A DIGITAL BODY...
A DIGITAL BEING ABLE TO PROJECT A PHYSICAL BODY...
HOW VERY...
FASCINATING.
THERE'S A GHOST IN THE MACHINE-- BUT WILL ANYONE NOTICE IN TIME?
FIND OUT NEXT MONTH IN
SPARK OF LIFE
PART TWO
UNTIL THEN, DON'T MISS OUT ON SONIC THE HEDGEHOG, SONIC SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE, SONIC SUPER DIGEST and the GRAPHIC NOVEL LIBRARY
PLUS, THERE'S EVEN MORE FUN IN THE BRAND NEW SERIES SONIC BOOM!